1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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VI

ARTS OF LIFE

The Village

361 THE typical Orokaiva village would comprise hardly more than a dozen houses, and many settlements are much smaller. In former times, if native accounts are to be trusted, villages were more extensive through need of mutual protection against the raider; and a resident magistrate patrolling the river Gira in 1901 speaks of a village 200 yards long by two chains broad, which contained seventy-one houses and was 'barricaded in with a look-out and fighting platforms on [712] the stockade'.[1] But nowadays pacification has brought about a tendency to scatter in small isolated groups.

The bush settlement is closely surrounded by walls of forest, so that the view is somewhat depressingly circumscribed; among the Salt-Water People the village stands virtually on the margin of the beach; among the River People it is invariably placed on the river bank. In most cases and in so far as the floods allow, it is well situated on dry ground. The modern village, by Government edict, is 364 kept almost scrupulously clean, and when the visit of a patrol is imminent one may see old folk and children engaged in the meticulous removal of weeds. At all times, however, it is fairly well swept by the women. Refuse of coco-nut husks and the like is thrown away beyond the edge [514] of the clearing, and for sanitary arrangements there is the privacy of the circumambient bush. Much of the credit for the cleanliness of the village is due to the tireless scavenging of pigs.

The House

342 In most instances the houses are set in two regular rows, facing one another. The space between, sporadically planted with coco-nut palms, is the scene of dances, plays, and inter-

[1] A. L. Walker, *Annual Report*, 1900–1, p. 53.